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STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION TERRE DES HOMMES

The World Conference on Human Rights

1. As stated in the report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1992/2 (Parts I and II)), 1990 was an exceptional year for children all over the world. The entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit for Children drew attention to all those concerned with the well-being of children. This expression of will went beyond the stage of simple oral commitments and could be observed in terms of concrete implementation. The achievement of universal child immunization, which saved the lives of more than 3 million children in 1990, proved that the Convention and the commitments made at the Summit could render certain objectives highly attainable, provided political will granted them sufficient priority.

2. The process, which began two years ago, carries many potential benefits for children. The principle of a "first call for children" is now discernable in many decisions made in the various sectors of the United Nations system. For example, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development granted prominence to children in the drafting of Agenda 21.

3. If 1990 was a year full of hope, the year of the World Conference on Human Rights, 1993, must not become one of disappointment. Is it necessary to recall that in certain countries children constitute a majority of the population? However, the rights of the child, as such, are not among the

items on the Conference agenda presented by various regional groups during the second session of the Preparatory Committee.

4. Human rights are the foundation for any equitable organization of society. The Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force with record speed, only nine months after its adoption, and presently has 118 States parties. A high-level conference on human rights cannot pass over in silence this obvious sign of interest in the child. It should make it a duty to include the rights of the child as such on its agenda, give them high priority and establish a strategy for the future on the rights of the child. The International Federation Terre des Hommes, therefore, requests the UNICEF Executive Board to call upon the appropriate United Nations authorities, as well as Member States, to participate in the process in favour of children launched in 1990, and to place a separate item on the rights of the child, as a high priority, on the provisional agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights.